

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The MUSLIM WOMAN

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NEXT MWA MEETING

8-9-91

Sunday, 11th August 1991, at 4.30 pm
at the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Rd.
London NW8

We shall discuss the preparation for Seerat
un-Nabi which will take place on October 13

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First Mosque in Madina Its Importance in Muslim Community

Qutubuddin Aziz

The first major undertaking by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) after he led his band of devoted followers from Makkah to Madina was to build Islam's first Mosque in the city of his adoption. The site he chose in Madina for constructing the first House of God in this hospitable metropolis was the spot where his faithful camel, Qaswa, which had borne him all the way from Makkah to Madina, buckled its knees and dismounted its holy rider. The site was a small field bounded by five tall palm trees which could be seen in the oasis even from a distance. The Prophet consulted his faithful followers and decided that this was the spot where he would build forthwith Madina's first mosque.

At dawn, shortly after the Prophet and his followers had said their morning prayers, they busied themselves in building the Mosque. They cleared the scrub, levelled the ground, made bricks and gathered stones and boulders for use in the construction work. The design of the Mosque was conceived by the Prophet himself. He took counsel from his associates but obviously the grand design for the first House of God in Madina was divinely inspired. The Prophet was acquainted with the architectural designs of the Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues but he wanted the Muslim Mosque to represent Islam's nobility and simplicity. In addition to being a place of worship, he wanted the Mosque to be the hub of the spiritual and temporal life of the Muslim community in Madina. Enshrined in the design of the Mosque built by the Prophet in Madina was the concept that it should correspond to church, townhall, school and hostel, all under one roof.

The Prophet's mosque in Madina was what architects call the open-plan mosque. Built over a rectangular area, it had sufficient open and covered space for the Muslim community to offer its congregational prayers. It had a niche but no dome or minarets. The walls were strong and the roof was thick and sturdy. It had a pulpit from where the Prophet delivered his sermon to the congregation of the Faithful.

What was remarkable about the construction of this history-making Mosque in Madina was the fact that although the Prophet and his loyal followers had reached the haven of their journey after a strenuous camel-ride in the desert, they built the mosque with inexhaustible energy and astonishing speed. In true comradeship, the Prophet broke stones, baked bricks, made mortar, climbed ladders and plastered the walls and roof along with his devoted associates. The inhabitants of Madina volunteered to help the Prophet in building the Mosque and it was a pleasant, heart-warming sight to see dozens of children joyfully helping their elders in the construction of the Mosque. The well-built Hazrat Hamza carried huge stones and mounds of bricks on his shoulders and never showed a sign of exhaustion on his face. Hazrat Abu-Bakr, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Bilal were amongst the Prophet's devoted followers who worked day and night to get the mosque completed in the shortest time. The mosque was, indeed, a collective undertaking and each and every member of the newly-arrived Muslim community in Madina and many of its original inhabitants made their historic contribution to its construction. Surprisingly, there was no mishap. It seemed that the omnipresent Allah was Himself guiding the Prophet and his team of mosque-builders. Water from the nearby well was in plentiful supply. The fringe of palm trees provided a welcome shade to the builders and the smile on the Prophet's handsome face cheered them. They

were inspired by the words of the Prophet that "work is indeed a kind of prayer" and that "God loves the hand of a workman". Their excellent teamwork in building the House of God made a great impression on the people of Madina.

The food which the Prophet and his associates ate at mealtime was meagre but the act of eating together while at work made the meal enjoyable. The builders of the Mosque would often sing hymns to God and the Prophet in a chorus. But when the time for prayer came, the Prophet and his associates would leave work and join in prayer to the Almighty. The families of the Muslims who had migrated from Makkah to Madina gave their help, support and encouragement to their menfolk in building the Prophet's Mosque. The inhabitants of Madina marvelled at the spirit of dedication, solidarity and comradeship they saw in the Muslim emigrants from Makkah and their impeccable conduct. They were struck by the high-minded and noble leadership the Prophet gave to the Muslim community and his utter selflessness. Word also got around in Madina of the humane virtues of Islam's great Prophet. If he noticed that the burden of bricks was back-breaking for the donkey, he would see to it that it was lightened. He disliked cruelty in any form not only to human beings but to animals as well.

While the Mosque was being built, a little child who was watching the laying of the bricks on the walls ran to the Prophet and begged that he be allowed to lay a few bricks. The Prophet was touched by the child's gesture; he swept him into his arms and put a small brick into his tiny hands. "Put the brick on the wall", the Prophet told the excited toddler. After the child had done what he was told, the Prophet said to him: "Now you can say that you helped me in building this great Mosque". He then let the child scamper back to his mother with the exciting news that he helped the beloved Prophet in the construction of the Mosque.

The Prophet raised no fund for the construction of the mosque in Madina. The male members of the Muslim community donated their time and labour free of charge. They pooled their savings to pay for the construction material used in the building of the Mosque. The people of Madina were astonished at the spirit of self-reliance shown by the newcomers from Makkah and their upright conduct.

In a few weeks what was only a vision became a reality; the construction of the Prophet's Mosque was completed. The hearts of the Muslims in Madina were filled with joy on the accomplishment of their first major collective undertaking in Madina. The Mosque was the embodiment of their religious aspirations as a distinct community; it was the focal point of their activity as a nascent society; it was the home of their spiritual and temporal leader; it was his court and secretariat; above all, it was the House of God wherein the Muslim community gathered daily to say their prayers and invoked divine blessings. When the Mosque was completed, the Prophet and his followers discussed what mode of announcement should they follow to summon Muslims to the Mosque at prayer-time. Some suggested a bell; others thought of a drum or a horn. The people discussed the matter in the assembly of his close associates. It was Hazrat Abdullah Bin Zaid who told the Prophet that he had a dream in which he saw that it was a human voice which called the Faithful to their prayer in the Mosque. The issue was decided; the Prophet saw the divine guidance. His eye fell on Hazrat Bilal, the black Abyssinian slave whom Islam had made a free man and a trusted follower of the Prophet. The Holy Prophet made Bilal Islam's first *Muezzin*. It was a signal honour for the young African. In Islam, colour and race have no meaning; those who join the fold of Islam are brothers and sisters in their uniting faith in God and His Prophet.

The Prophet instructed Bilal in the mode of call and the words he should utter while calling Muslims to pray in the Mosque. Watched by the concourse of expectant Muslims, Bilal clambered on to the roof top of the Mosque and gave the prayer call beginning with the inspiring words: "God is great". His resonant words echoed all over the oasis and the word of God was heard in every house in Madina. "My mosque is completed", said the Prophet of God to Bilal as he descended from the roof after uttering the prayer-call. So long as he lived, it was Bilal's privilege to mount the roof of the mosque five times a day and summon Muslims to their prayer.

As the size of the Muslim community in Madina expanded and the Prophet founded the world's first Islamic state, the role of the Mosque assumed many dimensions. It became Islam's all-important foundational institution. The Muslim community in Madina loved and venerated the Prophet's Mosque. He and his family lived within its compound and the Faithful who came to pray also met him daily; so close was the rapport between the Prophet and his flock. He led them in prayer and his Friday congregational address cemented their faith in Islam. As Madina progressed towards statehood, the Prophet used the Mosque even as a Council Room and a Reception Hall, a kind of Secretariat for the Islamic State he founded, and delegations from Arabia and abroad came to see him there. He also dispensed justice from the precincts of the Mosque to the Muslim community. He held grand assemblies of the Muslims of Madina to discuss spiritual and temporal matters, problems of administration, political issues and social and economic themes and the framing of defence strategy when Madina was threatened by hostile forces.

The Prophet's Mosque in Madina was the venue for Islam's important religious festivals and the social get-

togethers of the Muslim community. Even for marriages they thronged to the Mosque to have the marital contract blessed with the Prophet's presence. A propagator of education, he also made use of the mosque for educating the Muslim community. A part of it in later years served as a Community Chest – the *Baitul Maal*. The chronicles of the early days of Islam show that a band of Abyssinians presented a simple, rhythmic play with sticks in the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina and the Prophet and his wife, Hazrat Ayesha, witnessed the performance. The Muslim community respected the sanctity of the Mosque but it was not isolated from their social and corporate life. It was a living institution – the imperishable base of the Islamic way of life. The light of Islam thus radiated from the House of God built by His Prophet in Madina.

From: THE PROPHET OF PEACE AND HUMANITY, published by Islamic Media Corporation, Karachi, Pakistan.

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Human Kindness (Part 4)

Kindness to animals

The Blessed Prophet was sent as a blessing for all the worlds. He commanded us not only to be kind and merciful to fellow human-beings but to all fellow-creatures. *Once he went to a garden and saw a camel so thin its bones were clearly visible through the skin, and its eyes were sunken and hollow. When the camel saw the Blessed Prophet it approached him and put its head on his feet. The Blessed Prophet was moved by the camel's distress and stroked its head tenderly. Then, he called for the camel's master and said to him: 'Fear God. Do not torment these speechless creatures. God has made you their master. It is for you to take care of them and treat them properly. Do not overburden them; work them only as much as they are able. Feed them well and look after them and keep them nicely.'*

The Blessed Prophet prohibited unnecessary talk while mounted on a horse or camel. He said: 'Do not make their backs a speaking platform. When you reach your destination, unload them, then say prayers, and after that arrange for their fodder and only then take food yourselves.'

Islam teaches that every living being is under God's eye and praises Him. Therefore, we should not tease or abuse any living creature, human or animal. *The Blessed Prophet narrated a story of a man who, because he had been bitten by an ant, burnt their nest. 'God said: "You have burnt a community that used to praise God."'*

There are many traditions that teach us about being kind to animals. Here are some:

The Blessed Prophet said: 'There was a woman of

loose character. One day she came across a dog who was dying of thirst. She felt great pity for the dog but could not find any water to quench its thirst. At last she was able to find a well but there was neither rope nor bucket to draw water. She was at a loss what to do. Then she remembered that she was wearing leather socks. She took off one sock and tied it to the end of her scarf, and threw it down the well. In this way she was able to draw water from the well. Then she gently and slowly poured the water into the dog's mouth. The dog regained its strength, stood up and put its head on the woman's feet. God then blessed the woman in such a way that she gave up all her bad habits, asked for forgiveness from God and became a virtuous woman. God then pardoned all her sins.' Then, the Blessed Prophet added: 'I have seen her in paradise.'

The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, also narrated this story, about a pious woman. But this woman had an unfeeling heart. She kept a cat in her house to keep away the rats. But she did not give the cat anything to eat and it often ran away to look for food. To stop it running away, the woman tied the cat with a rope but still did not feed it. The poor cat, with nothing to eat, survived for only a few days and finally died of hunger. The Blessed Prophet commented: 'I have seen this woman in hell.'

Another story tells about Nasiruddin who was the slave of a king, and very fond of hunting. One day he came across a very pretty baby deer and picked it up and rode away. The mother deer saw Nasiruddin take her baby and followed him anxiously. Nasiruddin, pleased with the baby deer, was thinking about presenting it to his children to play with. After a time, he chanced to look back and saw the mother deer following him, her expression full of grief. He noticed too that she did not seem to care about her own safety. Moved to pity, Nasiruddin set the baby deer free. The mother deer nuzzled and licked her baby

fondly and the two deer together leapt happily away into the forest. But many times the mother deer looked back at Nasiruddin, as if to express her thanks.

That night Nasiruddin dreamt that the revered Prophet, peace be upon him, was addressing him: 'Nasiruddin, your name has been entered in the list of God, and you will one day have a kingdom. But remember that when you are a king you will also have many responsibilities. Just as you have shown mercy to the deer today, you should be merciful to all God's creatures. You should not forget your people by falling into a life of luxury.'

This dream came true and Nasiruddin did become king, Amir Nasiruddin Subaktagin, father of Sultan Muhammad. The moral of the story is that if we wish God to be merciful to us, we must be eager to show mercy to all the living creatures of the earth.

From MUSLIM MANNERS, published by UK Islamic Academy.

THE PROPHET 'ISA IBN MARYAM (Part 2)

by Sayyed A. H. Nadwi

"I have bought you a sign from your Lord. I will form for you out of clay something similar to the form of a bird and I will breathe into it and it will become a bird by Allah's permission. I will heal the blind from birth and the leper and I will bring the dead back to life by the permission of Allah and well you what you eat and what you store up in your houses. There is a sign for you in that if you are believers. I confirm what is before me of the Torah and to make lawful for you some of what was unlawful for you. I have brought you a sign from your Lord. So fear Allah and obey me. Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path".

When 'Isa sensed rejection in them, he said: "Who are my helpers to Allah?". The disciples said: "We are the helpers of Allah. We believe in Allah. We testify that we are those who submit (to Him). Our Lord, we believe in what You have sent down. We follow the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses!" (Those who rejected) plotted and Allah plotted. Allah is the best of plotters.

When Allah said: "'Isa, I will take you and raise you up to Me and purify you from those who have rejected. I will place those who follow you above those who have rejected until the Day of Judgement. Then you (all) will return to Me and I will judge between you regarding that about which you used to differ. Those who reject, I will punish them with a terrible punishment in this world and the Next World. They will have no helpers".

Those who believe and do good deeds will be given their wages in full. Allah does not love the wrongdoers. That is what We recite to you of the signs and Wise Reminder.

The example of 'Isa in the sight of Allah is as the example of Adam. He created him from earth and

then He said to him, "Be!" and he was. The truth is from your Lord. Do not be one of the doubters." (3: 45-60)

'ISA'S LIFE AND CALL IN THE QUR'AN

Read Allah's description of 'Isa's life and call:

"I am the slave of Allah. Allah has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined me to pray and to pay the zakat as long as I am alive and to be dutiful to my mother. He did not make me arrogant and wretched. Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I will be raised up alive." (19: 30-3)

AN ETERNAL CONFLICT

What had happened to other Prophets before him happened to 'Isa. The rulers and leaders kept away from him. The rich and powerful ignored him. They thought it a sin to believe in him and his followers. They would not give up the leadership, position, privilege and distinction they enjoyed. The words of Allah are true:

We sent no warner into any city except that its wealthy said: "We disbelieve in the Message you have been sent with". They also said: "We are more abundant in wealth and children, and we will not be punished". (34:34-5)

Paprikascsirke

Metric/Imperial
 1 chicken
 little grated lemon rind
 900 ml./1 1/2 pints water
 1 onion, chopped
 4-5 peppercorns
 little salt
 1 bouquet garni

Sauce
 75 g./3 oz. butter
 100 g./4 oz. button mushrooms
 25 g./1 oz. flour
 1-2 tablespoons paprika
 600 ml./1 pint stock (see method)
 150 ml./1/4 pint double cream
 salt and pepper

Serves 4-6

Divide the chicken into 4 portions (or buy in portions). Put the lemon rind, chicken, water and onion into a pan with the peppercorns, salt and bouquet garni. Simmer until the chicken is tender (about 45 minutes to 1 hour if young). Lift the chicken from the stock, strain the stock and keep 600 ml./1 pint (2 1/2 cups) for the sauce. Either dice the chicken or keep in the 4 portions.

Heat the butter in a pan. Toss the mushrooms in the hot butter for a few minutes, lift out on to a plate. Add the flour and paprika, stir well for 2-3 minutes over a low heat, then gradually blend in the stock, bring to the boil and cook, stirring, until thickened. Put the pieces or portions of chicken and mushrooms into the sauce. Simmer until thoroughly heated. Add some of the cream and seasoning, and simmer for 4-5 minutes; do not boil. Top with the remainder of the cream.

JULY MEETING

The monthly meeting of the MWA was held on Sunday, 14th July at the Islamic Cultural Centre. The meeting was opened at 5 pm by Dr. Zubeda Osman with the recitation of Al Fatiha.

Apologies were received from Mrs. Azra Rekhi, Mrs. Karima Mustafa, Mrs. R. Peckham, Mrs. Soraya Youssef.

Correspondence: Letters were received from UMO regarding their Youth Camp 17 - 24 August.

We received programmes of forthcoming events organised by the Muslim Institute.

Mrs. S. Siddiqui sent us a card.

A discussion on various topics took place which was very interesting: The strength of faith in Allah and the belief in the powers of the Holy Qur'an as a comforter, stress releaver, healer etc., what is permissible during menstruation; imbalance of hormones etc.

Hajj Mubbarak to Mrs. Quamar Bashir. She returned a few weeks ago. Unfortunately she did not feel very well. We send her our best wishes. - Other members who have gone abroad are: Mrs. F. Haq, Mrs. Mariam Omar, Mrs. Mavis Badawi, Mrs. Saeeda Sherif.

The speeches which were to be held by Dr. Osman and Dr. Aleem in August will have to be postponed. Instead we will discuss the preparations for Seerat un-Nabi which will take place on October 13. اكتفـاء
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REMINDER

WILL MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT YET PAID THEIR MEMBERSHIP FOR THE YEAR 1991 PLEASE DO SO WITHOUT DELAY.

We are updating our mailing list and would like to keep you all on it.

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◆◆◆ Branches ◆◆◆

54 Edgware Road
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Tel: 071-706 3880
Telex: 946240
CWEASY G

94 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1EZ
Tel: 071-247 1113
Telex: 895 1057
BARAKA G (East)

382 Stratford Road
Sparkhill
Birmingham B11 4AB
Tel: 021-766 6616
Telex: 334624